

THE NOTION OF THE CHURCH IN PAUL AND
ITS APPLICATION TO THE CRISIS
IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

A Professional Project
presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

in partial fulfillment
of the requirement of the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Rev. Souren Chinchinian
June 1976

This professional project, completed by

Rev Soren Chinchinian,
*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Eric L. Lita

Henry S. S. S.

May 3, 1976
Date

Joseph C. Haughe, Jr.
Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Abstract	v
Introduction	1
I. ISRAEL, THE PEOPLE OF GOD	12
The Activities of God	14
The Covenant as Expression of God's Mercy	15
The Role of the Law	20
The Meaning of the Worship	22
II. THE TRUE ISRAEL, THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD	26
The Church as the Eschatological People of God	27
Christ's Saving Action	30
III. THE RELATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES	33
Israel Remains a Holy People Despite Unbelief	35
Paul Insures the Freedom of the Gentiles	39
IV. THE NEW TEMPLE OF GOD	41
The Temple of God Points to the Individual Believer and the Local Congregation	42
The Spirit as a Source of Charismatic Gifts and a New Life	44
V. THE "CHURCH OF GOD" IN PAUL	47
"Church of God" as a Name for Particular Church	49
"Church of God" Stands for Early Community	53
VI. THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST TO THE CHURCH	65

Two-fold Views of the Term "The Body of Christ"	65
Arguments Against the View Which Considers the	
Church as an "Extension of Incarnation" . . .	69
VII. UNITY CRISIS IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH	73
Reasons for the Frequent Displacement of the	
Seat of Etchmiadzin, the Headquarter of the	
Armenian Church which Brought About a Second	
Center Known as the Seat of Cilicia	78
A Political Party Takes Over the Catholicate of	
Cilicia Creating Disunity in the Armenian	
Church	81
Reflection on Disunity of the Armenian Church	
in the Light of Paul's Concept of Unity . . .	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	92

ABSTRACT

Paul, as a matchless theologian, described thoroughly the nature of the Church by means of distinctive metaphors, namely "The Body of Christ," laying emphasis on her essential oneness, which has important implications for the Armenian Church suffering from the lack of unity. The first chapter deals with Jewish idea of "God's people," which occupies an important place in Paul's theology of the Church.

For him, the Jews are primarily a nation endowed with a special religious privileges and with a mission of salvation for the rest of the world. The covenant is seen as God's gift to his people. The initiative throughout belongs to God, and was intended to evoke from the people a response of gratitude which would find expression in a glad obedience to God.

The second chapter is an attempt to indicate that the Church represents an eschatological people. Paul once deliberately termed Christians "the Israel of God." God failed to achieve what he had set out to do with the nation of Israel due to their defiance of the covenant. As a result the old covenant became a dead letter, and there was a need for a new one to be written "upon their hearts." It was Jesus who through the shedding of his blood made a new

covenant and created the new people of God, the Church.

The third chapter discusses the relation between Israel and the Gentiles. Paul repudiates the suggestion that God has rejected his people. To reject his own people would be to leave them without children, and this is something that God will not do. There will be a "remnant, chosen by grace" (Rom. 11:5) To this remnant have been added believing Gentiles. There is a unity of Jew and Gentiles within the people of God, since all racial and social barriers were broken down.

The fourth chapter is concerned with the new temple of God. The temple, as a building, lost its meaning for the Christian community because they saw themselves as a spiritual body. They themselves constituted the new temple as the priests offering to God a spiritual sacrifice. On the other hand, the true temple of God is the risen Lord.

The fifth chapter has to do with the expression "Church of God" used by Paul. Its origin is best explained by means of a comparison with the "Church of the Lord," the Old Testament assembly in the desert. The early community took the title "Church of God" to emphasize the fact that, as the messianic community, it was the fulfillment of the desert assembly.

The sixth chapter refers to the two-fold interpretation of the term the "Body of Christ," which are: the

Extension of the Incarnation and the Bearing Witness to Christ. The conclusion is drawn that these are not exclusive terms but complementary. The Church is best described as a fellowship.

The seventh chapter focuses on the division within the Armenian Church. Paul's description of the Church as the Body of Christ implies that Christ is the cause and ground of the existence of the Church. The Armenian Church in its present divided situation has detached itself from the body and ceased being in right relationship with other members. Unless amendments are made towards restoring unity, the Armenian Church will be isolated and its activities crippled.

INTRODUCTION

In the study of Paul's concept of the Church, it is possible to distinguish three stages. The first is rooted in the Old Testament. Paul made use of ideas and formulas that Jewish theology had applied to Israel. These had been gradually idealized in the course of time, and Paul adapted them to the Messianic people. The Jewish idea of "God's people" is basic to Paul's theology of the Church.

Judaism was itself conceived theologically, with the Jewish nation as a chosen people, the realization of a divine ideal. God had given them privileges such as the covenant and promises, their theocratic constitution, a sublime glory and dignity as sons of God. When Christ came, these privileges were automatically transferred to the Christian community. Paul recognized the Christian community as the heir of the promises, God's true people, the true Church of Moses, the real Temple.

The Church is then a continuation of the old Israel, and the fulfilment of that "Israel of God" which was God's own conception of his chosen people. The Church is also a new nation, when looked upon in another light, because of that new principle that is the Spirit. The Church is a starting point in the new and spiritual creation. God had the idea of this new nation in mind when he willed heavenly riches to Abraham as his legacy. The Christian Church is God's true heir, in Christ.

The old nation was carnal, and yet it was spiritual in a certain figurative sense. It could call itself the "Church of God" with absolute truth during the greatest years of its history in the deserts. The Church of Jerusalem, which was the nucleus of the universal Church, inherited the title from its ancestors, and so it came to be justly applied to the whole Church. The Christians of Jerusalem were known as the saints and the elect because these titles were also inherited from the old Israel.

Dedication to the worship of God constituted one of Israel's privileges. Ideas connected with worship were applied to the Christians. Their community became the new temple of God, and they themselves were a spiritual priesthood in the new sanctuary. The Church of Jerusalem brought out the importance of all these themes. Paul was not an innovator in this matter. Judaism and early Christianity gave him the ideas, and his own theological genius made them into a synthesis. The notion of the Church as God's people became enriched by those basic elements of apostolic Christianity, the doctrine of faith, the conception of baptism, and the theology of the Holy Spirit.

The second stage of Paul's concept of the Church is seen in his missionary experience, which deepens this concept. In the great Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, the Christian community is distinguished from

its Jewish antecedents by faith in Christ as the promised Messiah. The new Israel of God, one body in Christ by their faith, is the several Gentile churches.

Paul's thought is closely bound up with experiences as a founder of churches in pagan lands. His conception of the Church came under the influence of his experience at first. He had to lay considerable emphasis on the fact of the "calling" of the Gentiles, and thus connected the ideas of "Church" and "vocation." This brought about a reminiscence of the holy assembly of the desert.

Likewise he saw the importance of the expression "Church of God", and he applied it to the churches he had founded. The Greek use of the word church, and the multiplicity of Greek connections that Christians would have, eventually brought Christians to speaking of churches in the plural, rather than of a universal church.

The term "Church," even when applied to a particular community, evokes the idea of an assembly, but Paul's conception of Christianity as a whole, is that of a messianic diaspora, or extension of the Jerusalem Church, all of which would be a part of the one holy nation. Here Paul is thinking exactly as a Jew.

His experience as an apostle led to other theological developments which were attributed to him. He speaks of the Christian life as a share in Christ's life through

mystical union, and as a participation in the life of the community of all Christians. Thus the idea of the Church's unity, and of the Church itself, was deepened. The political and juridical idea of a nation became enriched by the addition of another idea, that of an organism which lives on the life of Christ.

The formula "Body of Christ" expresses Paul's thought clearly. Paul had to express in Greek, the idea of unity among churches, and so he took over a commonplace of popular Stoicism from Menenius Agrippa. He linked this to the Eucharistic formula, and so turned the whole theme into a perfect vehicle for his own idea of Christian unity through identity with Christ's life.

The third stage is marked by the Captivity Epistles, when new problems have forced the apostle to make his expressions more precise. The doctrine of the captivity epistles is seen as a maturing of Paul's ecclesiology. Here the vocabulary changes, since from now on the "Church" is to be universal Church. Then, as he develops his theory of the mystery of Christ (domination over the cosmos), the Church is presented in a new pattern of thought. Ideas that seemed to have been thrown out at random in the earlier epistles, now acquire considerably more importance.

His idea of the Church becomes abstracted from

empirical reality. He uses formulas that come from the apocalypses of Judaism. The Church is still the totality of Christians, but it is seen principally in an ideal light. It becomes a celestial thing. It is the temple of heaven, the heavenly bride of Christ. It is God's wisdom personified in heaven. The Church goes to heaven with the risen Christ, and so the "body of Christ," the Church is his glorified body made spiritual. It is the fulness of God's sanctifying power in Christ.

In order to remain faithful to the letter of Paul's theology, it is appropriate to make a distinction between his theological development and the semantics involved in the term "Church." In the beginning, the Jerusalem Christians spoke of the "Church of God," meaning the messianic assembly. This, in terms of the here and now, meant the Christians. Although one might expect the name to spread quickly to the universal Church, it seems that this was not in fact the case. The Christians of Jerusalem had monopolized certain terms (for example, "Church of God," "saints," "elect") of hieratic nature.

It was the Greek use of *ekklesia*, in fact, that did most to make the word of general use for all Christian communities. And it was in this way that "Church" and "God's people," which had been used equivalently hitherto, became separate notions. In Paul's final stage, *ekklesia*

recovers its original oecumenical meaning. He had achieved the unity that his theology demanded between Greek and Jewish Christians, at Jerusalem. Thus the obstacle disappeared that had made it impossible to call the totality of Christians the "Church." Originally oecumenical, the word "Church" comes to designate the universal Church as such in the captivity epistles.

The titles "saints," "elect," "brethren," "believers," which often are placed beside the term "Church," show that Paul's conception is derived from the idea of the Hebrew quahal, the assembly of the Israelites, particularly in their desert wanderings, called by Israel's God to be present before him. The call which they received from the Lord is the action of the Holy Spirit by whose operation they individually became believers and collectively became the Church. The unifying force and underlying motive bringing them together is their faith.

Since it is a gift from Christ, who bestows it on his own initiative and no one can be his who has not received the Spirit (Romans 8:9), Christ makes a man a believer by his action upon him and makes him the temple of God (I Corinthians 8:16) or of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). In the same way that the Spirit makes a man a believer, he makes the Church, but, just as it is something more than a group of a certain number of believers, so the presence and action of the Holy Spirit within the Church is something

more than the sum of his actions on each of the members.

Paul describes the Church as the body of Christ. The use of this famous phrase begins in the first epistle to the Corinthians and runs through the later epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. "Now," says Paul, "you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it" (I Cor. 12:27). He speaks of the Church which is Christ's body (Eph. 1:23); he speaks about the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). He speaks of Jesus Christ as the head of the body (Col. 1:18), and of Christ's body which is the Church.

There is more than one view of what Paul meant when he spoke of the Church as the body of Christ. There are those who believe that phrase must be taken in a mystical sense, and that when a man enters into the Church of Christ, in a mystical sense, he enters into the body of Christ. In a famous phrase, the "Church" has been described as an "extension of the Incarnation," so that just as God was Incarnate in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is incarnate in the Church.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that this phrase is to be taken in a much more practical sense, and in what might be called a functional sense. The work of Jesus Christ must go on, but He Himself is no longer in the flesh to do it, for he has returned to his glory. Jesus Christ needs the Church as His body, in the sense

that in the Church He must find a channel to do his work and a voice to speak his message. These two views of the meaning of the phrase the "body of Christ" are not mutually exclusive, but the direction in which a man lays his stress does make a difference.

It would be wrong to say that Paul thought of the Church as an extension of the incarnation--that just as God was incarnate in Christ, Christ is incarnate in the Church. The reason Paul draws upon the metaphor of the Church as the body of Christ in Romans and Corinthians, is to establish the proper relationship of Christians to each other. There is one body, but it has many members, and these members differ greatly from one another. There was tendency, particularly in Corinth, to make distinction among Christians and to covet the more spectacular gifts of the Spirit. This led to tensions and dissensions in the congregation.

Paul argues that there are admittedly great differences in the roles of various members of the body, but they all belong to the body and the least is important. Since it is God who has arranged the members of the body as it has pleased him, there should be no discord but only mutual love and concern among the several members of the church. (I Cor. 12:24f). Paul carries the metaphor a step further in the captivity epistles and speaks of Christ as the head of the body (Eph. 4:15; Col. 1:18).

This indicates that Paul does not completely

identify Christ and his church. He is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). The body is pictured as deriving its nourishment and unity from the head (Col. 2:19); and the body is to grow up in every way unto him who is the head (Eph. 4:15). This suggests the complete dependence of the church upon Christ for all its life and power. Christ as Head is both part of the Body and more than part, for he supplies and fills it. While the Head is perfect, the body is incomplete and is being built up by the apostolic, pastoral and teaching ministry of the church into a "full grown man" (Eph. 4:11-16), the whole Christ.

On the other hand the body is dead without which the head is practically helpless. The body is the instrument through which the decisions and purposes of the head are carried out. The Church becomes the means of Christ's work in the world; it is his hands and feet, his mouth and voice. As in his incarnate life, Christ had to have a body to proclaim his Gospel and to do his work, so in his resurrected life, in this age, he still needs a body to be the instrument of his gospel and of his work in the world. If the Church is to do the work for which Christ designed her, then she must live so close to Christ, she must be so much in Christ, that her unity with Him is such that she can be called nothing less than the Body of Christ in the mystical sense of the term.

The Church completes Christ, who is her head.

The exalted Christ will not be complete until united with the Church of the redeemed. For Christ is to be "all in all," and he only gains that fullness through the Church. And so in suffering also, there is a union between Christ and his church. All that he suffered the Church shares in. They were not the sufferings of one apart from him. And so what we suffer on earth, Christ shares; hence, Paul is able to say, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the church." (Col. 1: 24).

Paul's view of the Church as a body could be applied to the Armenian Church, which fifteen years ago was split into two factions, similar to the situation that prevailed in the church of Corinth. The split resulted from two major factors connected with the organizational structure of the Armenian Church. The first factor lies in her democratic character. Both clergymen and laymen share in the administrative power, but in the church councils, the majority of the votes belong to the laymen. They have greater say.

One of the Armenian political parties took advantage of the privileges given to laymen. After years of systematic efforts, it succeeded through its followers to take control of one of its centers for the purpose of using it as a means of leadership of the Armenian people in

diaspora. If Paul's term "the Church of God" is really to be retained within the Armenian church, the number of the laymen should be reduced to the number of the clergymen. The clergymen are more inclined to seek the interest of the church than the laymen.

The second factor lies in the existence of two spiritual leaders independent of each other. The seat of the first spiritual leader is in the Soviet Armenia. Naturally, he is subject to regulations of local authorities and has restricted religious freedom. The seat of the second spiritual leader is in Lebanon, a country with a democratic system. He literally carries out the instructions of the Armenian political party, having been elected by its followers in the church councils. He is western oriented.

As a result there is always tension between the two seats. The first patriarch accuses the other of being used as a tool by a political party, and the second accuses the first of serving as a Communist agent. Paul's view of the Church's unity may become a reality when we abolish the system of having two spiritual leaders. Since Christ is the head of the Church, the Armenian church, one member of that body, will live in greater harmony having one earthly spiritual leader.

CHAPTER I

ISRAEL, THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Paul in agreement with his contemporaries refrains from applying the term "church" to the Jews prior to Christianity. The universalist tendencies of Judaism were certainly a real preparation for Christianity, but an historian would not see the Jewish community as a church, but only as a nation. A nation whose ambition is to universalize its religion so as to assimilate all other peoples into its own national life is not necessarily a church on that account. A church is only possible when religion is taken in abstraction from race and nationality.

Trained in Jewish theology, Paul reflected on the "people of God" soon after his vocation and particularly in view of his mission to the Gentiles. The Jewish idea of "God's people" is basic to Paul's theology of the Church. In the LXX $\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ people is used over 1500 times in the sense of ethnic group of the same stock and language, particularly Israel itself; and the expression $\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ becomes a technical term for Israel as the chosen people of God.¹ Paul,

¹Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 268.

however, does not use the word $\lambda\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$ in his normal style. Paul's use of the expression "people of God" is limited in the Epistles to a group of Old Testament quotations.

At the beginning of Romans, chapter nine, it is clearly emphasized that to the Old Testament people of God belongs "the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (Rom. 9:4). These constitute the privileges of God's people. There is no novelty in Paul's enumeration of Jewish privileges. The term "the covenants" does not stand for two separate covenants, Jewish and Christian. The word is plural because one and the same covenant was constantly repeated with three moments of special importance: in the person of Abraham, at the Exodus, and in the future.² The covenant of the future will only be a renewal of the one that already exists.

The various stages of the covenant are therefore simply successive manifestations of the one divine will. This is more or less how Paul sees it, although he understands particularly the new aspect of the Christian testament. The covenant was first made apparent in Israel, and it became prerogative of this nation. The second reason why the word "covenant" is in plural can be explained by

²Gerald R. Cragg, "The Epistle to the Romans: Exposition," in Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), IX, p. 539.

the fact that several covenants are mentioned in the Old Testament (Gen. 6:18; II Sam. 7:11-16).

In the Old Testament, God declares himself to be the God who is, and who will be, for Israel. Although his manifestation takes place under the guise of the terror of fire, the shaking of the mountain, and the thunders of heaven, his coming in this way is not a sign of hostility to Israel. "I am thy God." That is the decisive word to Israel. In his majesty and his holiness the almighty Lord is there on Israel's behalf as Israel's God. This quite definite relationship between the God who has come forth from his hiddenness and the people of whom his mighty word has taken hold, finds its expression in the making of the covenant.

The confederation of the twelve tribes enters into a covenant relationship with God, which is to be the determining factor in its existence, and within which the whole of its life is to be lived. What happened long ago at Sinai is once again repeated in the liturgy; to the listening multitude the command once again goes forth: "This day you have become the people of the Lord your God" (Deut. 27:9).

The creative word of God brings into existence a new reality: the people of God.³ Where God is present in his covenant, there he reveals himself as Lord in mighty acts

³H. J. Kraus, The People of God in the Old Testament, (New York: Association Press, 1958), p. 24.

and miracles before the eyes of all the peoples of the earth (Exod. 34:10). But it is in the first place over Israel that his lordship is exercised: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:2-3).

In Israel, within the closed circle of the covenant, the Lord wills to be the sole Lord of all life; that is what the Old Testament is all about. The people whom the Lord has freed has become the people of God. From this point on, no other deity can make claim to any authority over them. When God demands the obedience of the twelve tribes, this is no arbitrary demand; it is based on the covenant in which he has declared Israel to be his own possession.

Thus, it is only in relation to the covenant that the significance of the commandments of God can be fully understood: "Keep silence and hear, O Israel; this day you have become the people of the Lord your God. You shall therefore obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you this day" (Deut. 27:9-10)

The covenant was an action, taking place in history, which resulted in a binding relationship between God and his people. The covenant created and sustained the old Israel. It was made by God which brought into being God's

own people. The covenant was not the discovery of certain spiritual laws on the part of the ancient Jews.⁴ It involved the personal dealings of a living God with a nation of persons. "All that the Lord has spoken we will do," was the people's response when the covenant was made (Exod. 19:8). It is only the living, personal God who can confront men with a word and make them hear.

The covenant was first established by God, then received by men. It is not an agreement between equals, a bargain which man struck with the Almighty.⁵ Pagan religions surrounding Israel were filled with such ideas of covenant. Their devotees were desperately trying to bring gifts to the gods in order to persuade them to enter into an agreement through which worshippers could escape their wrath or gain their favor.

In strong contrast to this, the covenant made with Israel was not one which they had offered to God. It was rather one he had offered to them. God had taken the initiative, and presented the covenant to them. He chose them to be his people before they chose him to be their God. God had elected or appointed them to be his solely by his own free choice.

⁴Donald G. Miller, The People of God, (Naperville, Ill.: SCM Book Club, 1957), p. 40.

⁵Robert Davidson, The Bible Speaks, (New York: Crowell Co., 1959), p. 90.

They could accept but could not determine the conditions of the covenant. The conditions were absolute. "Thou shalt" or "thou shalt not," was God's word to them. They could not demand of God in return any "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not." They could only accept and obey the conditions not initiate or bargain or modify them.

The covenant was grounded in God's mercy, not in the worthiness or the achievement of man.⁶ To be "elected" was the same as to be "loved." The Israelites could never claim that because of their number or power or goodness or cleverness they were called to be God's own people. Rather they were the unworthy objects of God's unbelievable love. "It was not because you were more in number than any people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples," says Deuteronomy; "but it is because the Lord loves you." (Deut. 7:7-8)

Here was something absolutely unheard of in history. When other gods only terrorized, and when men were feverishly engaging in all sorts of religious ritual and offerings to bribe them into harmlessness, here was a God who called men his own for no other reason than that he loved them. He did not need to be appeased; he did not demand gifts as the price of beneficence; he did not wait for man

⁶Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, page 272.

to achieve something of worth for which he could be rewarded. He only waited to be gracious, to deal kindly with the undeserving, to show his love to those who were wholly unworthy of it.

God's covenant consisted of an unbelievably gracious act of redemption.⁷ "You have seen what I did to Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself." This was the basis of God's covenant with Israel (Exod. 19:4). Love had stepped into history, broken the bands of Egypt's cruelty, and made a people out of those who were no people. It was this overwhelming love of God delivering his people from bondage at the exodus which became the center of the preaching of Israel's prophets in all generations to come.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son," said Hosea (Hos. 11:1). "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you," said Jeremiah (Jer. 31:3). It was God's great redemptive act as the sign of his love at the exodus which forever grounded the covenant in his mercy, rather than in man's achievement.

This kind of love demands response.⁸ If God in his

⁷Donald G. Miller, p. 42.

⁸Robert Davidson, p. 90.

mercy had brought them out of "the iron furnace" of Egypt, then this laid upon the people whom he had chosen the responsibility to respond to him when he said: "Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people and I will be your God" (Jer. 11:4).

Love can be satisfied with nothing less than love in return. And love can never be coerced. It is always free. The covenant made by God, therefore, had to be freely accepted by the people as token of their glad response to undeserved mercy. "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient," was the people's part of the covenant relation (Exod. 24:7). Obedience means not only a docile disposition but the actual carrying out in life of the will of the one who is obeyed.

The covenant bound together religion and life in a unique way. Religion was life, life was religion. For the covenant was made with a people who were to carry out their response to it in their communal life. The covenant meant a community based on God's will. To serve the God of the covenant, then, was to serve the people of the covenant. A community was created in which there was responsibility to express the will of Lordship of God in every relation.

Consequently, the ten commandments were given, with their elaboration to specific aspects of behavior (Exod. 19:23), as the norm of the people's responsibility to God

and to each other. The law was not a means of gaining God's favor; it was rather a means whereby men could show their gratitude for God's favor. The law was a declaration of God's loving grace to his people. It was his way of showing his people how to live responsibly towards him and towards their fellowmen, that they might know the fullness of life he wanted them to have.

The commandments were not so much prohibitions as they were statements of what was not done in covenant relations. They give a picture of the way a man would want to live in right relation with God. In understanding the responsibility of an Israelite to his fellows, it is necessary to recall the Hebrew conception of corporate personality.⁹ The whole nation was so much a unit that each individual dwelt in the whole, and the whole dwelt in the individual. When one man sinned, the whole nation sinned. Achan's sin meant that "the people of Israel broke faith." God's anger burned not only against Achan, but "against the people of Israel."

The sense of corporateness meant that responsible behavior towards one's fellows was absolutely involved in Israel's response to God's covenant.¹⁰ To wrong a brother

⁹Rudolf Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, (New York: World Book Pub. Co., 1969), p. 36.

¹⁰Robert Davidson, p. 100.

was to wrong Israel. To wrong Israel was to wrong the God whose people Israel was. To break community, therefore, by stealing, murdering, lying, committing adultery, was to act irresponsibly towards the covenant and defy God, who in his love had redeemed them.

The covenant also demanded service to those who were outside the covenant community. In order for God to reveal his love to all men, it was necessary first that he reveal his love to some men. So initially God selected Israel as those to whom his love was to be shown. But did God's love for them mean that he did not love others? No, exactly the opposite was true. He showed them his love so that they in turn could make his love known to all men.

Election is not alone to privilege but to responsibility.¹¹ This eliminates all pride in being elected, and destroys all complacency. He who is appointed to know God's love is appointed also to share that love. He who has known the joy of membership in the people of God is obliged to seek to extend the bounds of God's people until they take in every life in every land. To accept God's covenant is to serve him who is the Suffering Servant. To be one of God's beloved sheep whom he calls by name is to go out into the long night with the Great Shepherd searching for those who are lost, until he finds. (Luke 15:3-7)

¹¹Alan Richardson, p. 272.

Another element in the covenant was worship, designed to preserve and to strengthen all other aspects of the covenant.¹² The crucial question for Israel was how could the luster of the faith born at the Exodus be protected from the corrosion of the years. The solution to this lay largely in Israel's worship, which brought to a focus every element of the covenant.

God commanded his people to erect a tent of worship. This was to remind them constantly that God was in the midst of their life, and was to be a place where they could meet with him and come to know his will. The instructions were: "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst." (Exod. 25:8) The worship of the tabernacle assured the dealing of a personal God with his people. The living One was personally present and active in the whole of their national life.

Their worship reminded them of God's initiative in redeeming them.¹³ Worship, to the Hebrews, was not something man brought to God on his own. It was rather man's response in gratitude for what God had done and in obedience to what he had commanded. The forms of worship were prescribed by God, and even the offerings were first

¹²H. J. Kraus, p. 12.

¹³John Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 432.

given to man by him. When life was offered to God in the form of sacrifice, it was not man's gift. It was man's obedient return to God of what he had first given him.

God's mercy in spite of their unworthiness, was likewise kept before them constantly by their worship. As the deed of their redemption at the exodus was retold in word and re-enacted in symbol in the Passover Feast, each succeeding generation of Israelites was led to participate in those events anew. They did not think of them as mere memories. They were contemporary events as well.

With their conception of the unity of their people, what happened to their families had in a profound sense happened to them. They were there at the Exodus through their solidarity with former generations. Hence, the marvelous kindness of God made known at the Exodus was not just for that one generation, but for the whole of Israel, both past and future. Worship was dramatic action designed to keep their sense of God's goodness and the wonder of his redemption in all generations.

Worship was also designed to quicken their response to God and to enforce their responsibility to him.¹⁴ The motif of the whole book of Exodus was significant. First came redemption (Exod. 1:18). Then followed law, which was a statement of the type of character which redemption

¹⁴Donald G. Miller, p. 49.

demanding from the redeemed (Exod. 19:23). Then worship was instituted not only to remind them of redemption, but to aid in securing and maintaining a character worthy of God's saving act (Exod. 24:40). Worship meant the offering of the redeemed soul to God for his service, and the dedication of one's self to the ethical behavior which the covenant demanded.

The communal character of their life was also strengthened through their worship. In other Eastern religions, worship is often an individual matter. The individual goes to his temple to engage in some isolated act of prayer or offering. The worship of the Israelites however, was corporate. It was a matter for the whole nation. Men, of course, did worship God as individuals, but that was the individualizing of something which was by its very nature corporate. The whole congregation met at the tent of meeting. The feasts were kept by all.

Through his worship, the individual Israelite was bound to Israel, past, present, and future.¹⁵ He could worship rightly, therefore, only as he lived in covenant relations to the other members of the covenant community. To break the bonds which tied him to the other members of the fellowship was to sever the bonds which bound him to

¹⁵Rudolf Bultmann, p. 45.

God. Worship without ethical behavior towards one's brother was an abomination to God (Isa. 1:12-17; Jer. 22:3-17).

Worship also focused attention on the covenant demand for service.¹⁶ To be reminded of redemption was likewise to be reminded that they were the heralds of redemption. To recall God's deliverance at the Exodus was to be confronted with the prophetic hope that what he had begun there, he would one day complete. Israel had been saved from Egypt in order that she might be God's instrument for one day saving Egypt.

"In that day," said one of the prophets, "Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts had blessed saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage.'" (Isa. 19:24-25) The reminder of what God has done, therefore, was also the promise of what God would yet do. Rightly to worship was to serve. Such was the meaning of God's covenant with Israel. Here lies the root of the Church.

¹⁶Donald G. Miller, The People of God, (Naperville: SCM Book Club, 1957), p. 50.

CHAPTER II

THE TRUE ISRAEL, THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD

A close look at the history of the Old Testament people of God will enable us to realize that out of it the eschatological concept of the people of God arises, especially in the preaching of the prophets.¹ Despite Israel's disloyalty to the covenant, God of his free grace expresses readiness to re-establish the old relationship in a new and definite manner. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God...I will make with them an everlasting covenant, and I will not turn away from doing good to them." (Jer. 32:38ff) Such is the fundamental meaning of the prophetic promises. Similarly in the view of late Judaism, it is true that at all events only the Israel of the eschatological future is the "people of God" in the full sense of this term.

It is inferred from a number of passages in the New Testament that the Church knew itself to be this eschatological people of God. Paul called Christians "the true circumcision" (Phil. 3:3), the children of Abraham (Rom. 4:16-25), "the commonwealth of Israel" (Eph. 2:12), and "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). Paul defending himself before

1

Alan Richardson, p. 267.

Felix insisted that Christians worship the same God as Israel ("I worship the God of our fathers"), believe the same Scriptures ("believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets"), and share the same hope ("having a hope in God which these themselves accept"), (Acts 24:14-15).

The most striking affirmation in the New Testament that the Church represents the eschatological people of God or the new people of God is to be found in I Peter 2:9f., where various Old Testament passages are brought together and applied to the new people of God, the Church.² Four meaningful predicates point to its vocation and status: "chosen race, kingly priesthood, holy nation, purchased people." The continuation "so that you may proclaim the great deeds of him who has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" refers to Isaiah 43:20f., where the prophet after recalling God's great deeds in the journey out of Egypt, promises a new exodus.

In so doing God calls Israel (according to the LXX): "My chosen race, my people that I have acquired for myself in order to tell of my great deeds." The epistle considers this eschatological Israel as realized in the Church. The terms "Kingly priesthood" and "holy people" derive from

²Paul S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 69.

Exodus 19:6 (LXX) which reveals both the sharing in God's kingship and also the priestly service of the new people of God in the world. That the early church took over these significant attributes and functions is demonstrated by Apocalypse 1:6 and 5:10. The "purchased people" is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament.

Finally, in Rom. 9:24 Paul makes it clear that the church is God's new people. This is most vividly expressed in the use of quotations from Hosea.³ The prophet speaks of the present apostasy of Israel and her eschatological salvation. Hosea was directed to name one of his sons "Not my people," for apostate Israel was no longer God's people and he was not their God (Hos. 1:9). However, in the day of salvation, this situation will be changed; they will be called "Sons of the living God" (Hos. 1:10). "And I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'Thou art my God'" (Hosea 2:23).

In Hosea these prophecies clearly referred to Israel, but Paul applies them to the Church, which consists of both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 9:24). There is no doubt that in this striking passage the Church is intended to be understood as the eschatological people of God in which the old promises for Israel are fulfilled in God's purchased

³George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 538.

people which he has newly acquired for himself through the redemptive action of his Son.

The important Old Testament formula, "I will be their God and they shall be my people," is quoted several times in the New Testament and applied to the eschatological community of redemption. Paul quotes it also in 2 Cor. 6: 16 from Ezekial 37:27 in order to distinguish the Church from the unbelievers. In Hebrews 8:10, it appears in the lengthy quotation from Jermiah 31:31-34 in order to show the accomplishment of this great prophecy concerning the new Covenant. It is evident how deeply rooted was the early Church's conviction that it was the eschatological people of God. The idea forms the main theological theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

One significant element of the Old Testament conception of the people of God still retained its force and validity for New Testament thought: God's preferential love.⁴ Even before the foundation of the world, he chose us in Christ that we might be holy and blameless before him (Eph. 1:4). It is from him that the call comes which leads to incorporation in the holy people of God, and those who belong to him are simply those who have obtained mercy. God even calls to it precisely those who in the eyes of the world are regarded as inferior and foolish.

⁴Donald G. Miller, p. 52.

The reception of the Gentiles is the work of God. He himself has undertaken to take of the Gentiles a people to his name (Acts 15:14). Paul, too, is only a chosen instrument of God. After the failure in Athens, God encourages him for the beginning in Corinth, "Do not fear, but speak, and do not be silent, for a numerous people belongs to me in this city" (Acts 18:10).

In view of the hardening of the greater part of the Jewish people in unbelief, the acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles can even become a problem; but Paul in the epistle to the Romans justifies God's providence by the grace of his vocation and the free disposition of his mercy⁵ and quotes as a proof the same passage of Hosea 2:25, "I will call the people that is not my people to be my people and her that is not loved to be loved" (Rom. 9:25). This new people of God, formed of the remnant of Israel and many Gentiles has only come into being because of the freely given love and grace of God.

Something new however, contributes to constitute it, Christ's saving action.⁶ God has acquired his eschatological community for himself through the blood of his Son. God once chose and acquired his people by the deliverance

⁵Lucien Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), p. 51.

⁶ Paul S. Minear, p. 69.

from Egypt, now he acquires his community or Church, namely, the eschatological one that belongs to him definitely, in a new way, through the redeeming blood of his Son. All the guilt incurred by the previous people of God disappears; God makes a new beginning in grace. That also makes it clear that for early Christian thought the "Church of God" is nothing else but the people of God, so that Church and people of God in this perspective are identical. This is confirmed by Titus 2:14: Christ Jesus "has given himself for us in order to redeem us from all iniquity and cleanse for himself a people of his own."

The passage alludes to Ezekial 37:23, a reference to the eschatological people of God in which the old formula is found, "They shall be my people and I the Lord will be their God." Instead of this, the expression known from Exodus and Deuteronomy "people belonging to him" is used. Significant in this respect also are the supplementary expressions that are sometimes added in Paul's epistles to the churches. The apostle greets "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 1:1). He praises the same persons as "imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus" (I Thes. 2:14). All the "churches in Christ" send greetings in Romans 16:16.

The people of God of the new Covenant is no longer

in any respect the same as in the old,⁷ even though fundamental ideas of gracious election to be God's possession, of Covenant and of God's community are preserved. It is true that no where in the New Testament is a "new" people of God mentioned, but the new Covenant is (I Cor. 11:25; Heb. 8:13), and if the close connection with the new Covenant, the idea of the people of God in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12) is remembered, then in fact a new and eschatological people of God is envisaged. The prophet was still thinking of the old Israel, simply renewed by grace.

That the new people of God was also to extend beyond the bounds of the nation only became a reality through the atoning death of Jesus "for many" (Mark 14:24), that is to say, for the Gentiles, too. The originality of the eschatological covenant of grace and of the eschatological people of God is seen in the fact that it is no longer the old sign of the Covenant, circumcision, but faith in Jesus Christ and the "circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11), that is to say, baptism, which is decisive for admission into the people of God and membership of God's Church. Jews and Gentiles have equal access if they take this new way of salvation opened up by God.

⁷ George Eldon Ladd, p. 539.

CHAPTER III

THE RELATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES

This question deeply preoccupied Paul, particularly in Romans 9-11, where he presents a remarkable survey of sacred history. Israel's rejection of her Messiah leads Paul to the question, "Has God rejected his people?" (Rom. 11:1). In order to reconcile with the divine promises to Israel the fact that the greater part of his nation was obdurate in unbelief regarding Christ, he makes the following arguments: whether the word of God had become ineffectual (9:6); whether there was injustice with God (9:14); whether God was responsible for Israel's failure, and whether God's promises for Israel will still be fulfilled in an unsuspected way. He even warns the converted Gentiles against arrogance towards Israel.

Paul's metaphor of the olive tree suggests the unity of the old people of God, Israel and the Church.¹ The olive tree is the one people of God. Natural branches--unbelieving Jews--were broken off, and wild branches--believing Gentiles--were grafted onto the tree. This makes it perfectly clear the Church of Jesus Christ lives from the root and trunk of the Old Testament Israel. While God has not finally and irrevocably cast away his people Israel,

¹Alan Richardson, p. 258.

the church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles has become the branches of the olive tree--the people of God--the true Israel. Not only faithful Jews, but all believers including Gentiles, are the true circumcision who worship God in spirit and glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:3). All such have been circumcised in heart (Col. 2:11). As the spiritually circumcised, they are the children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7), their father (Rom. 4:11,16,18); they are the offspring (Gal. 3:29) and descendants of Abraham (Rom. 4:16).

Those who formerly were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenant of promise (Eph. 2:12) have now been brought near to the God of Israel. The whole tenor of Paul's use of the metaphor of the olive tree is that while natural branches--Jews--have been broken off the olive tree and wild branches--Gentiles--grafted into the people of God, it is God's sovereign pleasure yet to bring the natural branches to faith and so graft them back into the tree (Rom. 11:23-24). Paul's argument is circular. Israel did not stumble in unbelief so as finally to fall (Rom. 11:11), but that through their unbelief salvation might come to the Gentiles. The salvation of the Gentiles will in turn provoke Israel to jealousy. "If their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean?" (Rom. 11:12).

Even in unbelief, Israel remains a holy people (Rom. 11:16) and will finally be grafted back into their own olive tree (Rom. 11:24). In this manner by provocation on the part of the Gentiles "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). This does not mean that every last Israelite will be saved, but the people as a whole. Membership in the Jewish nation does not constitute salvation or even a prerequisite to salvation. Paul does not speculate when or how the salvation of the Jews will take place, but it is probably an eschatological event to occur at the end of the age. Whatever form the salvation of Israel takes, it is clear that the terms of salvation must be the same for those of the Gentiles: faith in Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah, that is the Jewish nation will become Christian.

The Epistle to the Galatians is a good source on the vocation of the Gentiles.² In the Epistle Paul strongly defends his legitimate right as apostle to the Gentiles and his equality of rights with the original apostles, as well as his gospel without circumcision and legal observances. In an allegorical way, he thinks of Abraham's two wives as types of freedom and bondage. (Gal. 4:21-31) The slave woman Agar, who only bore according to the flesh, is attached by him with the Covenant of Mt. Sinai, which bears children into bondage; she corresponds to the "Jerusalem which now

²Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Church in the New Testament, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), p. 78.

is" and which lies in bondage as its children do.

The free Sarah, however, who bore the son "by reason of the promise," becomes for him the representative of the "Jerusalem above" which is "our mother"; "you, however, brethren, are like Isaac, children of the promises." Paul is writing to fight against the old obsolete order of bondage to the Law to which, for him, the "Jerusalem which now is" is holding. Moreover, Paul found that empirical Israel was persecuting believers in Christ subject to the new order of salvation.

Paul's conception of the true people of God, which equally includes believers from Israel and the Gentiles, has become "in Christ" a total and new unity: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). It follows that for Paul, a new people of God has taken the place of the old, and one which is formed on the promises of blessings made to it. The new people of God also rests on an entirely new foundation, that is, belief in the one heir to the blessings and sole mediator of salvation, Jesus Christ.

Paul, as mentioned before, regards this new people of God as the "Jerusalem on high" (Gal. 4:26), or as its earthly manifestation--the "mother" of the Christians--and he also calls it "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). The

Galatian Christians whom Paul had primarily in mind when he speaks of those who are following his rule and the Israel of God are to be blessed with peace and mercy from God. The apostle is transferring the old title of honor to the new society of those who believe in Christ. The blessing that was promised to Abraham for his physical offspring is transferred to Christ and through him to all who are bound to him, bound to him by faith and baptism (Gal. 3:14,16,29), while in the epistle to the Romans the spiritual descent from Abraham is directly ascribed to all who, like Abraham, allow themselves to be justified by faith, the uncircumcised equally with the circumcised (Rom. 4:11-17).

Paul attempts to reinterpret the terms "circumcision" and "Jew" (Rom. 2:25-29) or deny to some "from Israel" membership of "Israel" and of some of Abraham's offspring, that they are his children, and of his children in the flesh, and that they are God's children (Rom. 9:6-8). For him the unbelieving Israel is the Israel according to the flesh (I Cor. 10-18) and to the unbelieving Jews and Greeks, he opposes the Christian community (I Cor. 10:32).

Along side the titles of honor of Israel, Paul laid full claim to its actual privileges and presents the Church as the legitimate heir of the old people of God. Moreover, he attempted to provide a theological basis for this inheritance by seeking to recognize the characteristics of the new

people of God of believers in Jesus Christ. Thus he developed the primitive Church's consciousness of being an independent society.

The close tie between Jews and gentiles in the Church is clearly pointed out in the epistle to the Ephesians.³ It is "the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:4). Through Christ who proclaimed peace to "those afar off" (gentiles) and to "those that were near" (the Jews), both groups who formerly were separated have equal access to the Father in the one Spirit (Eph. 2:16ff)

It is only with the incorporation of the gentiles that the essential eschatological picture of the Church emerges, and God's economy of salvation reaches its climax and "the manifold wisdom of God" is made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places through the Church," that is, through her actual reality and her preaching, and so the destruction of their power is announced (Eph. 1:21-23; 4:8-10).

From this point of view, the Church cannot be envisaged in any other way than as comprised in God's eternal salvific plan as the Church of Jews and gentiles, which

³Peter Richardson, Israel in the Apostolic Church, (London: University Press, 1969), p. 148.

Christ represented in his body on the cross and made into "a new man" (Eph. 3:15), and which he has redeemed (Eph. 5:23) and sanctified (5:26); the one Body of Christ, directed and built up by him, its heavenly head, whose growth is promoted and brought to the "full measure of the plenitude of Christ" (cf. 4:11-16).

From what has been said, it is implied that Paul also insured the freedom of the gentiles in the Church.⁴ It was due to him that the settlement at the "Council of Jerusalem" which accorded the gentiles' entry to the Church without circumcision or adoption of the Jewish Law was not only maintained in the following period despite the intrigues of Judaizers, but was also understood.

His thesis of the one way of salvation for all in faith in Jesus Christ, presented in the epistle to the Galatians as well as in the epistle to the Romans, dissipated any doubts that might have been possible: "There is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:22f).

Consequently, the gentiles have equal rights as brothers in Christ, and there may not be any neglect of the gentile Christians by the former Jews (cf. Gal. 2:15-18).

⁴Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Story of the New Testament, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1916), p. 11.

On the other hand, of course, the gentile Christians must not despise the old Israel on account of its failure (cf. Rom. 9-11) and must show loving consideration for their Jewish Christian brothers who may have a more rigid conscience in matters of food and drink (cf. Rom. 14).

Thus, Paul admonished and educated all his churches to Christian concord and also promoted harmony between the mother-church in Jerusalem and his new foundations. In that way he made an essential contribution to the formation of a common consciousness of the Church as a whole.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW TEMPLE OF GOD

Another metaphor Paul uses which shows that the Church is the true Israel is that of the temple. Both the Old Testament and Judaism anticipated the creation of a new temple in the Kingdom of God (Ezek. 37:26ff.; 40:1ff.) Jesus had spoken of the formation of his church as the creation of a building (Matt. 16:18). He was also reported as uttering an enigmatic prophecy: "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands" (Mk. 14:58). It is possible that this was understood by the early Christians to mean the establishment of the new messianic community.

While the primitive community continued as Jews to worship in the temple (Acts 2:46), Stephen was the first to realize that temple worship was irrelevant for Christians (Acts 7:48f). Paul sees the Christian community taking the place of the temple as the eschatological temple of God, as the place where God dwells and is worshipped.

The metaphor had a threefold emphasis. The individual believer has become a temple of God because the Spirit of God indwells him (I Cor. 6:19). As the temple of God, the believer is holy; he belongs to God. Therefore, he is not his own and may not dispose of his life as he may

desire. Immorality is a contradiction of the essential character of the believer. There was a libertine tendency in Corinth that disparaged the body under the slogan, "All things are lawful to me" (I Cor. 6:12), even sexual license. Paul corrects this view by the affirmation that the body is the temple of God's Spirit.

Not only the individual believer but also the local congregation is the temple of God because the Spirit indwells the corporate fellowship. This again has a very practical application; as the dwelling place of God, the congregation is a holy people. The community in Corinth was rent by schisms that clustered around four prominent names: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ.

This seems not to have been mere sectarianism but to have resulted from the impact of gnosticizing Judaism,¹ that had in turn disrupted the church. This situation Paul condemns in frightening language. Because the local church is God's dwelling place, whoever "destroys," (i.e.:) brings ruin upon, the local congregation by false teaching and destroys its unity, him will God destroy (I Cor. 3:17).

The fact that the church is the temple where God dwells excludes the logical possibility of becoming "mated with unbelievers" (II Cor. 6:14). This must refer to

¹L. Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, (London: Adams and Charles Black, 1970), p. 98ff.

relationships with idolatrous pagans of such a sort that it compromised one's Christian testimony. It is clear that Paul does not mean to prohibit all social contacts with unbelievers, "since then you would need to go out of the world" (I Cor. 5:10). The clue to Paul's meaning is found in the words, "What agreement has the temple of God with idols?" (I Cor. 6:16). Any yoke with unbelievers that compromised one with idolatrous and unusual practices (I Cor. 6:15) was excluded because of the holiness of the Church.

Paul applies the same metaphor to the universal Church (Eph. 2:19-22). Gentile believers are no longer aliens from God's people; they are God's true household; they are, in fact, a temple built upon the foundation of Christ, the apostles, and the prophets, who grow into a holy temple in the Lord. Here in the Church rather than in Judaism is the dwelling place of God to be found. The presence of God has removed from the Jerusalem temple to the new temple, the Christian Church.²

The fact that Paul uses the metaphor of the temple to designate both the local and the universal Church reinforces a fact already evident in the use of ekklesia,³ namely, the unity of the Church in its diversity. The local

²Bertil Gärtner, The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the N.T. (London: University Press, 1965), p. 65.

³D.E.H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul, p. 148.

congregation is not part of the church; the universal church is not thought of as the sum and total of its parts; rather, the local congregation in its local expression.

In the Epistles of Paul, we encounter a two-fold idea of the Spirit. Sometimes he is seen as a charismatic gift, and sometimes as a gift which brings with it a new life, and a new nature, together with all the demands which holiness makes upon the believer. In the first appearance of the Spirit, there is indication of the initiative taken by God.

The Spirit has been given (Rom. 5:5), has been sent (Gal. 4:6), has called the Christians (Eph. 4:4); and the corresponding part which men play is to receive him (I Thes. 1:6). There was a renewal (Rom. 7:6), a justification (I Cor. 6:11). The Christians received the seal (Eph. 1:13), and they were baptized in the one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13).

There are two passages which comment on this initial intervention of the Spirit. "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law?", Paul writes to the Galatians, "or by hearing with faith?...Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" (Gal. 3:2) Paul seems to have in mind here the giving of the essential gift which transforms the Christian's nature and which is furthermore accompanied by charismatic manifestations which prove the existence of sanctification in the Spirit.

To the Thessalonians Paul states: "Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit." (I Thes. 1:5)

Thus the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has a double aspect.⁴ It is the Holy Spirit who guarantees the efficaciousness of the apostles' work by manifesting himself by means of miracles, charismatic gifts and the persuasiveness of preaching. And at the same time, he produces in the faithful the charismatic gifts which accompany a more permanent presence, in supernatural joy and peace, which correspond to the deepened nature of the Christian. All of this is very similar to the ideas which occupied the Church of Jerusalem, except that Paul places greater stress on the permanent sanctifying presence of the Spirit. But he does not forget that the gift of the Spirit opens up eschatological vistas.

The giving of the Spirit means the rewards and the joys of the Kingdom of God, the realization of the messianic promises: "You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is guarantee of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13).

⁴Lucien Cerfaux,

Here again Paul's theology deepens and he develops the permanent aspect of the part played by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to Christians (I Thes. 4:8), and he lives in them (Rom. 8:9), and sanctifies them (I Cor. 6:1). He gives them the status of sons of God (Rom. 8:15) and makes them temples of God (Eph. 2:22). He makes them one with Christ and one among themselves (I Cor. 6:17).

The same Spirit works through the charismatic gifts in the community, looking after the interests of the whole body of believers (I Cor. 12:11), and it is in baptism and the Eucharist that Christians come under the influence of the Holy Spirit who makes them all into one and the same people, one and the same body (I Cor. 12:13). All Christians share the same fellowship in the Spirit (Phil. 2:1). Just as it was the letter of the Law which brought the people of old together, so it is the Spirit who shapes the new people. (Phil. 3:3)

CHAPTER V

THE "CHURCH OF GOD" IN PAUL

In the view of K.L. Schmidt, "church" and "Church of God" are identical expressions.¹ Thus, wherever Paul uses the word ἐκκλησία, τοῦ Θεοῦ is always to be understood. This is, of course, true for Βασιλεία where τοῦ Θεοῦ has always to be added. Besides, Schmidt claims, there is no distinction between the Church, understood as universal Church, and the many local communities, because every community, however small, is always representative of the whole Church of all Christians.

If this is so, the "church of God at Corinth" would not mean the Corinthians' church considered alongside the Roman church, the Ephesian church and others. It would mean the one community of the Church insofar as it is present at Corinth. It is the community in general, not in particular, that Paul considers when he speaks of the humblest members of the Church (I Cor. 6:4) or of the need of keeping silence among the women at public worship (I Cor. 14:34).

Many scholars hold Schmidt's view. In the main it is acceptable, but a distinction needs to be made.² We can

¹K. L. Schmidt, Gerhard Kittel (ed.), Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), III, p. 506.

²Lucien Cerfaux, p. 107.

agree that the Christians considered themselves as the "people of God" from the beginning. Thus the idea of a universal Church is prior to that of the local communities. But the notion of "the people of God" is one thing, and the history of the word ekklesia is another.

There is no indication that the word ever connoted the universal Church, directly and explicitly.³ It is not possible to prove that "church" and "Church of God" are synonymous. The proper way for understanding Paul's concept of the term "Church of God," is to consider the texts rather than the existing theories. We discover two series of texts in the first of which, the expression is used in regard to the Judaeo-Christian church. In the second, it applies to the church of Corinth.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul writes: "Brethren, you became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea; for you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews" (I Thes. 2:14). In this context, "churches of God" is a privileged title for the churches of Palestine which the Thessalonians are to imitate. One might ask if it belongs exclusively to the Palestinian churches, since the churches of Galatia are never called "churches of God," and the church of Thessalonica is given the paraphrase,

³Lucien Cerfaux, p. 107.

"church in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ."

When used in the plural, the formula takes on its most concrete sense.⁴ It means the local churches as such, and not, for instance, "the one Church of God, such as it exists in Corinth." In I Thes. 2:14, $\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu\ \sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\sigma\tilde{\omega}\nu$ emphasizes the idea of local churches, and so we must translate this as the "local churches of God in Judaea," since there are plenty more local churches and presumably other churches of God. Moreover, this plural use ruins the paraphrase proposed for I Cor. 1:2. Compared with I Thes. 2:14, the formula "the church of God which is at Corinth" simply means "the local church of Corinth."

II Thes. bears out I Thes. in several passages. For example: "We ourselves boast of you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which you are enduring." The parallel with the first epistle, the allusion to persecutions and tribulations, and the fact that we are only here at the beginning of Paul's foundations, suggests that here again, the "churches of God" are the communities in Judaea. The opening salutation speaks of the local church in the same terms as does the first epistle.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul writes: "You have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted

⁴Lucien Cerfaux, p. 108.

the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers (Gal. 1:13). The letters to the Thessalonians show us that from the beginning of his correspondence, Paul uses "church of God" as a name for particular churches. There is no reason to suppose that he changes its meaning now, making it apply to the universal Church.

The context does not favor the interpretation that Paul is speaking here of the universal Church. Paul is not thinking beyond the immediate circle of Jerusalem, when he speaks of surpassing many of his fellow Jews in zeal for his religion. In Galatians 1:22, he expressly mentions the churches of Judaea, which he called, in the letters to the Thessalonians, "The churches of God which are in Judaea." There would be no problem if the church of Jerusalem was the first to give itself the title of "Church of God," and if Paul were accusing himself of having persecuted the Jerusalem community.

There are more instances in Paul's use of the term "Church of God." Two of them belong to the opening salutations of the letters to the Corinthians, and the two others occur in the section of the first letter, 10:32 and 11:22. The latter instances come in the context of reorganization in the matter of the community assembly. "Give no offense

to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do" (I Cor. 10:32).

Abuses in the liturgy had been a source of scandal, and Paul has to remind the Christians of Corinth of the presence of neighbors, Jews, Greeks, and "the Church of God," that is, their fellow Christians, whom they meet at the community assembly. Moreover, (11:16), the phrase, "we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God," gives more precision to the formula. The "churches of God" whose tradition Paul recommends, are the local churches of Judaea.

Abuses in the celebration of the Supper are an even graver matter. "I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you assemble as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat, for in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?" (I Cor. 11:17-22)

In the first phrase, *ekklesia* is used in its popular sense of an assembly with this difference, that the Christians gather for a religious reason. The idea of an assembly is still in Paul's mind when he writes "when you

meet together." Paul knows his Greek Bible sufficiently well to have read of the "Church of the Lord" with its meaning of an assembly. Even if one were not to accept this church as the assembly of Christians, one would still have to take "Church of God" as meaning a local community. In the immediate context, the expression "churches of God" does in fact have the meaning of local churches (I Cor. 11:16). The "Church of God" and the needy, in I Cor. 11:22, are typical Hebrew parallel. This makes it possible for us to identify the two. The Church of God is the organization in which the needy Christians are involved, and this is not the universal Church.

Paul addresses the church of Corinth as "Church of God," and is consistent in giving it that name. This is customary for him, and it supposes the formula to be significant. The opening salutation of the second letter, again in accordance with Paul's usual custom, takes up what he has expressed in the first. We have to admit Paul does not call the Corinthian church "Church of God" by chance. He uses it as a title of honor, and the Corinthians are meant to show themselves worthy of it.

The title is analyzed in the salutation of the first epistle, as "they that are sanctified" and "called to be saints." The latter formula refers directly to the desert assembly, and the name is true of "Church of God," corresponding to the "Church of the Lord" in the Septuagint.

The context in which Paul makes much of the title "Church of God" depends constantly on the parallel between the Church and the desert. The Lord's Supper is compared with Hebrew sacrifices (I Cor. 10:18). The Jews in the desert underwent a baptism and were granted a Eucharist, which were types of the Christian order of the future (10:1-4). All the things that happened to the Israelites were figures of future events (10:6). Christians might receive the same punishments that have been visited on the Jews. To despise the Church of God (11:22) or cause scandal in it (10:32) are similar prevarications to those of the Jews in the desert, and they dishonor the holy assembly.

Thus, Paul applies the title to the church of Corinth, as result of this elaboration of parallelism between the Church and the desert.⁵ Paul uses the title "Church of God" meaningfully, and after reflection. A Christian church reproduces God's assembly in the desert. When he speaks of the church of Jerusalem, or the churches of Judaea, he is conforming to a current usage, but even then the title signifies Paul's respect for the original community, or for the communities in Judaea which provided traditions for all.

"Church of God"--the Original Community. Paul's use of the term indicates that the title originally belonged

⁵ Lucien Cerfaux, p. 113.

exclusively to the earliest Christian community, the church of Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, it would have passed on to the churches of Judaea. Paul then applies it explicitly to the Corinthian community, whereas the suggestion was only implicit in his words to the Thessalonians: "You became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus" (I Thes. 2:14). These words implied, however, that all the Christian churches were also churches of God. "Church of God" continued to be the special name for the Church of Jerusalem. Each local church was founded as a cell which reproduced the features of the primitive church which, in the beginning, was the whole Church of God.

This theory is supported by an analysis of Paul's texts. A more direct proof can be found in the Acts of the Apostles. The Jerusalem community gave itself the title of ekklesia (Acts 5:11; 3:13) and among the Christians of Judaea, there was only one ekklesia: "The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace" (Acts 9:31). Likewise in Acts 8:3, Paul persecuted "the church." This is the formula which comes so often in the epistles, and means the early Christian community among the Jews.⁶ After the foundation of the Antioch community, which became separated from the Jewish community, it became necessary to speak in terms of "churches" rather than of "the Church."

⁶Lucien Cerfaux, p. 115.

It was natural that the Antioch community should be called a church, as was the one at Jerusalem. It was reasonable that the Christians of Jerusalem should prefer not to speak of all Christians as one community. According to their rule, the pagans could not come into the "Lord's assembly" if they refused to be circumcised. From this time onwards, the idea of local churches, and the use of the word "church" in the plural, becomes a regular thing (Acts 11:22 and 13:1).

There was a fundamentally religious meaning in the word "church."⁷ It could not be applied indiscriminately, and when pagans accepted Christianity, a split occurred. This is easily understood if the word had retained its Old Testament meaning of the "Church of the Lord," the Church as it had been in the desert.

It is reasonable to suppose that Jerusalem was the first place in which the Christian community gave itself the name "church." We have to bear in mind what an influence the Bible had on the early Christians, who saw themselves as the church of the latter days, or messianic era. Stephen's words, and his reference to the church of the desert (Acts 7:38), give one to suppose that at Jerusalem it had been observed how Deuteronomy uses the formulas "Church" and "Church of the Lord."

⁷ Lucien Cerfaux, p. 116.

CHAPTER VI
THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST
TO THE CHURCH

The Christ who is related to the Church is an inclusive personality.¹ Paul presumably derived this conception partly from his religious environment, and partly from his experience of fellowship with other believers in Christ. The various phrases or metaphors which we encounter in the epistles of Paul are attempts to express this truth in logical categories; they are projections of the conception of corporate personality upon the plane of metaphor; they are attempts to rationalize a mystical idea. Consequently, no one of these phrases may be taken as basic to the others; they are interlocked, and each reveals some aspect of the fundamental reality of the union between Christ and the Church.

The Christ who is an inclusive personality is not some spiritual, ethereal and exalted Lord, but the Jesus who died on the cross and rose from the dead. This fact is brought out particularly by the comparison of Christ with Adam, by our reception "in Christ" of salvation, by our death and resurrection "with Christ," by the redemption of

¹Ernest Best, One Body in Christ. (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), p. 20.

the Bride by her Bridegroom. It is not only the individual members but the community as a whole which is related to Christ.

This relationship is described with metaphors--body, bride, building, in Christ, with Christ. They have two paradoxical aspects, appearing in different forms. It can be expressed in two relations which the head bears to the body; on the one hand, it is regarded as organically united to the body, on the other as overlord of the body.

The first side is shown, also, in the picture of Christ as "one flesh" with the Church, his Wife, and as chief corner stone in the building, the remainder of which is the Church. He and the Church together form a "whole"; without him the Church is nothing; in him the Church is everything. The unity which he forms with it is in some way identified with himself; he is the whole Christ, Body and Head.

While he is a part of the "whole," he is also more than the "whole"; the one person whom the "whole" forms is in him and he fills it.² The second side of the paradox, Christ as ruler of the Church, is seen in his distinctness from the Church. The Church exists as a community in its own right, described as a Bride; as such it owes obedience

²John A.T. Robinson, The Body. (Chicago: Alec. R. Allenson, Inc., 1955), p. 69.

to him. He is also distinct from it, since it is He who redeems, nourishes, and unifies it, and fills it with all his own divine fullness. Neither side of this paradox can be neglected.

Another and related paradox is that of growth and completeness. Since the Church is one with Christ, it must be complete, but also since it owes him the duty of obedience, it may be regarded as in process of growth towards that completeness. This repeats a common paradox of the individual Christian life, viz. justified, yet called to be just; adopted as a son, yet bidden to become like a son.

Thus the Church is baptized into Christ and is in him; yet it must grow up into him. The Church is glorious, holy, and without blemish; yet Christ always cares for it, nourishes and cherishes it.³ It is full; yet is continually being filled by him. This amounts to saying that the Church is regarded as both perfect and imperfect: as Christ's body it must be perfect; as it grows from Christ with a divine increase and is being built up in love, it cannot be perfect.

In the growth of the Church, whether in numbers or in perfections, every member has his part to play. To each is given his own gift of grace "for the equipment of the

³Maurice Goguel, The Primitive Church. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1964), p. 68.

saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12); to all is given the coming gift of love "unto the building up of itself, that is, the body in love" (Eph. 4:16). If one member fails to exercise his gift, that hinders both the growth of the whole and the individual growth of each member. The growth of each member is involved in the growth of the whole, and the growth of the whole in the behavior of each member.

Similarly, the whole Church shares in some way in the experience of anyone of its members. If one member is injured or suffers, the whole feels it; if one member is honored and rejoices, the whole rejoices with him. If one member deliberately endures suffering in the exercise of his gift, then the whole Church is comforted, and so is built up; thus suffering and growth are linked together. Suffering had its necessary place in the accomplishment of the Messianic purpose of Jesus, and it has its necessary place in the growth of the Messianic community; it is suffering that is made perfect.

The community has an organization.⁴ Each member of the community has a special and particular role within the community which he must exercise for the benefit of the whole. This follows because the Church is likened to the organism of a body whose limbs and organs have different

⁴James M. Robinson, The Theology of Paul. Lecture course given 1956, Candler School of Theology, p. 64.

functions. The functions of some members are considered more important than those of others, e.g. the eyes in the body, the foundation stones. But all are necessary to one another; eyes do not make a body nor foundation stones a building. There is no suggestion that those with different functions stand in a different relationship to Christ. Each has a place in the organization and is equally dependent on one another.

Individual members of the Church certainly have particular duties towards those who are not members, e.g. as evangelists and good neighbors; individual Christians are called to warn, admonish, and convert others, but the Church itself is not called to these tasks.⁵ As a community it is called to be a perfect and harmonious community, its members living together in unity. This meaning comes out in the description of the Church as a Body. It is a metaphor which looks inward and not outward.⁶ It is true also of the other metaphors which are used to describe the relationship of Christ and the Church; their emphasis is upon the unity of Christ and Church, and the interdependence of members, and not upon the Church as Christ's instrument in the world.

To speak of Christ as a corporate personality is,

⁵ Alan Richardson, p. 304.

⁶ Ernest Best, One Body in Christ. (London: S.P.C.K, 1955), p. 137.

perhaps, misleading; it may suggest a picture of the Church as the new instrument of Christ's personality in the world. For this purpose inclusive personality would be a better term, as it does imply a picture of a Church which acts and speaks expressing Christ's personality. On the other hand, inclusive personality does not convey the mutual internal linkage of the members as does corporate personality.

The community which is related to Christ in the metaphors is a world community. The person who belongs to it belongs primarily to a world-wide community, and only secondarily to a local manifestation of it as a congregation in a particular place. When he travels he is always to be received in the local congregation as a brother in Christ.

The individual congregation and denomination is therefore related to Christ, not directly, but because its members are members of the world-wide community, which is in Christ and is his Body. The Church is not consequently, to be described in terms of congregations, but in terms of individual and interrelated Christians. The individual congregation, however, manifests the life of the whole Church in a particular place, and, therefore, can in a derived sense be described as "in Christ" or as "his bride" (II Cor. 11:2).

The community which is related to Christ is a new community. For Paul prior to his conversion, there were

only two communities--the Jewish and Gentile; now there is a third--the Christian. As a new community, it consists of new men, who are distinguished from their old Jewish and Gentile selves. The new men and the new community are a new work of creation by God. Within this new community, not only are old distinctions of class, race, and sex wiped out, but new distinctions appear through the bestowal of Charismata. Former duties and relationships are given a new solemnity; new obligations and affinities are created in Christ.

It is impossible to conceive of a Christian who is not a member of the Church, which is related to Christ as in him and as his body. Every Christian dies and rises with Christ; he is baptized into Christ; he receives the gifts of righteousness and life from him; he is in Christ. Thus he stands in a new relationship to all those who are in Christ. The life of Christ, which is the life of his Body the Church, flows in all its members and reaches him, not only directly but through others; he cannot therefore separate from other Christians without separating himself from Christ. Individual Christians consequently do not exist.

Although all Christians are members of this community and enter into new relationships to all those who are in Christ, their personalities are not lost in a greater

whole. In the corporate personality of Christ, the full personal responsibility of each believer; indeed, we can say that only in Christ personal responsibility and true individuality is fully realized. The individualism which has its root in selfishness is destroyed; the individualism which has its root in the possession of particular talents and graces is developed. And, as those talents and graces are used and as true individualism is developed, the whole Body grows. No member can grow apart from the growth of the whole, and when the whole grows, each member grows. This growth is a growth in love (Eph. 4:16). The whole Church shares in the experience of each of its members; members rejoice together and sorrow (I Cor. 12:26); if one member deliberately as a Christian, endures suffering, the whole Church is built up.

The various metaphors are applied to the existing Church with all its imperfections. There is no suggestion that within the existing community there is a select group to which they should more properly apply. Paul in his discussion of the Body, when writing to the Corinthians, does not say, "The good ones among you are in the body of Christ; the bad ones are outside of it"; he accepts them all as in the Body, even though he had many complaints to make about the conduct of some. At the same time, if Paul did not address any selected group within the existing Church as

the Body of Christ, he certainly believed that some of them might not "inherit the Kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21), and that, though they might be partipators in the sacraments, they might yet be "overthrown" (I Cor. 10:1-22).

To this apparent contradiction, there are two possible solutions. We may say that all who are members of the existing community are members of the Body of Christ, but that they may not always retain their membership. Alternatively we may say that Paul treated as members of the Body all who allied themselves with the community, though in his own mind he had suspicion that some of them were not really members of Christ's Body. "You claim by your association with the Church to be members of the Body of Christ; behave, then, as such a member would." The argument underlying the description in I Cor. 12:12-27 of the Body of Christ is an exhortation to live together harmoniously as that Body: "Let them be what they claim to be." This is in line with a tension which runs continuously through the writings of Paul, a tension between indicative and imperative.

The paradox which we discovered in the relationship of Christ and the Church appears again when we consider the unity of the Church. On the one hand the unity of the Church is a "given"; "given," not merely because all Christians have faith in the same Lord, but because there is one Body, and all Christians are in the one Lord; the unity of

the Church exists in Christ and is not due to the possession of any particular form of organization or hierarchy.

On the other hand, Christians are bidden to realize this unity and to make it effective in the Church; they are to attain unto it. This two-fold aspect is similar to the two-fold relationship of Christ as "one flesh" with the Church and as its overlord. The unity of the Church is Christ and he exists, yet the Church must grow up into him and reach maturity. Just as the life of the Church is nourished, its fellowship increased, its dependence on the cross and resurrection of its Lord made plain, so also does its unity grow by participation in the Lord's Supper.

We come now to the nature of the actual relationship between Christ and the Church. The Church is not just an association of people who join together because they have common religious interests and have adopted Jesus as their leader; the Church is not really and absolutely Christ himself. These are two extremes; somewhere between them is the truth. There are at least two common answers. The first of these would be termed as the John the Baptist view. The Church is a finger pointing men to Christ, and saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God." This interpretation, in which the Church is regarded as bearing witness to Christ, comes largely from the more traditionally orthodox Protestant theologians.

Karl Barth writes of:

...that one and only imperative and obligatory task from which the Church derives its existence, a task which lies upon every man who, as a responsible being has accepted the cause of the Church as his own. This task emerges immediately from the fact that the one and only Word of God has once for all been uttered, for all men to heed, in the fact of the Incarnation... the task from which the Church derives its being is to proclaim that this has really happened and to summon men to believe in its reality.⁷

Parallel to this emphasis on the Church as bearing witness to Christ, is an emphasis on the Lordship of Christ over the Church. He is Redeemer and Savior of the Church, and he is its Lord. This trend understands the presence of Christ, not in terms of union or fellowship, but of overlordship. It asserts that where Christ is not present as Lord, the Church is not present, and a body which does not possess Christ possesses none of the marks of the true Church.

It is apparent that this interpretation of the relationship of Christ and the Church does not touch upon the mutual relationships of the members of the Church to one another. This inadequacy derives from the assumption that Christians are logically prior to the Church, which is then defined as their sum total. But for Paul there is no such thing as a solitary Christian; the faith that unites a man to Christ unites him also to other Christians; the Church

⁷Karl Barth, The Church and the Churches. (London: J. Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 14, 15.

is more than an aggregate of Christians; it is a fellowship. But is it even sufficient to call it the communio sanctorum?

We have seen that Christians are linked not merely in fellowship to one another but also to Christ; Christ and believers are joined together as head and body to form one whole, and the Church cannot be separated from this whole; the members of the Church are organically related to Christ as well as to one another. Christ is the life of the Church, its sustenance, its growth, and its unity; consequently, we cannot describe the Church fully as the communio sanctorum; we must introduce Christ into our description.

The second of the common answers attempts to do this by regarding the Church as the extension of the incarnation. William Temple expressed it thus: "The incarnation is, for Christians, not something isolated; it is the seed and the spring of a continuation of itself which is to go on through the ages until the purpose of God for mankind is fulfilled."⁸ In speaking of the Church as the continuation of the incarnation, William Temple and his followers seem to regard it as continuing Christ's work. As a matter of fact, Christ's work and person cannot be discussed in isolation. A true incarnation implies an atonement.⁹

⁸William Temple, Christ in His Church. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1925), p. 8.

⁹Ernest Best, p. 154.

We have already seen that there is strand of thought in Paul which tends to identify Christ and the Church. Christians are members of Christ. He fills the Church with all his divine powers and graces. The Church is a full-grown man who is Christ. The Whole Christ is Head and Body. The Church is in Christ. This seems to justify us arguing that Christ fills the Church with his personality, that it is his instrument in the world and therefore, as his incarnation, continues his work. Yet on the other hand, there is much that distinguishes Christ from the Church; he is not only united to it but stands over against it as its Redeemer and Lord; to him it owes both its existence and its daily obedience.

The view of the Church as the continuation of the incarnation does not seem reasonable because: (1) It is generally agreed that the New Testament basis of this conception is the phrase "the Body of Christ"; as Christ when on earth had a body, so he still possesses one by which he can work out his purposes. This phrase "the Body of Christ", is not, however, used ontologically but metaphorically in the New Testament;¹⁰ for that reason we must be careful in the conclusions we draw from its use.

In the passages where the phrase occurs, it is not used to describe the Church as continuing Christ's work but

¹⁰Ernest Best, p. 112..

to describe the relative positions of Christ and the Church in their mutual unity and distinction. This holds also for those other phrases concerning the relationship of Christ to his Church. The Church is seen in relation to Christ and not over against the background of the world as would be necessary to a conception of incarnation.

(2) The theory absolutizes one of the metaphors describing Christ's relationship to the Church and makes it determinative of Paul's doctrine thereof. But Paul's thought was too rich to be contained in one metaphor; the other phrases he uses must be allowed their part in shaping our knowledge of the doctrine.

(3) Atonement and incarnation cannot be separated. Christians in the Church suffer, but we have seen that their sufferings cannot be regarded as possessing any atoning value; they may serve to build up the Church, but they do not serve to reconcile man to God. If the Church does not continue the atonement, it does continue the incarnation.

(4) There are the moral imperfections and sins of the Church which Catholic theology has never allowed to exist in the earthly life of Jesus. An imperfect incarnation, that is, the Church cannot be described as the continuation of a perfect incarnation. It is here that the emphasis we have found on the distinction of Jesus from the Church is important; there is not a complete identity of

the two, else the Church would be perfect, and yet there is such a measure of identity as to distinguish the Church from the world and to make the Church the means by which the world comes to know and appropriate the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Perhaps the relationship of the earthly and divine aspects of the Church is better likened to the relationship of the words of the preacher to the Word of God which he proclaims: the two are neither distinct nor identical; the human words are not perfect, but sinful, and yet they convey the divine Word. So the Church conveys the Christ to men, brings him into their situation.

(5) So far as the Biblical evidence goes, it is easy to paint a picture of each individual Christian as continuing the incarnation. Christ is in him, and he is in Christ; he is dead; and Christ lives in his stead (Gal. 2: 20). Christ speaks in him (2 Cor. 13:3), and he has Christ's mind (I Cor. 2:16). He continues Christ's work of preaching, healing, casting out devils. Thus he continues Christ's incarnation. This conclusion cannot be accepted; neither can it in the case of the Church.

The value of the first theory which regards the Church as the witness to Christ, rests in the emphasis it lays on the Lordship of Christ over the Church. The value of the second rests in its emphasis on the union of Christ with his Church. This theory appears attractive because it seems to bridge the gap between the events which happened

under Pontius Pilate and the world in which we live; Christ is incarnate in the Church, which is composed of men and found among men. Here, it says, is Christ still living and working amongst men once in his physical body, now in his mystical body, the Church. But while the theory does bridge the gap, it also robs the events under Pontius Pilate of part of their uniqueness; they become only the beginning of the incarnation of Christ, which still continues. On the other hand, the theory which regards the Church as only the witness to Christ fails to bridge the gap. It does not bring Christ into our midst. We need both to bridge the gap and to preserve the once-for-allness of the events which happened under Pontius Pilate.

It is appropriate to regard the Church as a fellowship, since it consists of a mass of interrelationships between Christ and Christians and between one Christian and another.¹¹ It is a participation in the experiences of Christ and of other Christians. Christians died with Christ on the cross and they shared in the new life of his resurrection. They are in him, and so experience the redemption that God has wrought in him. As they have partaken of sin and death through Adam, so now they partake of life and righteousness through Christ. As Head of the Body, he supplies them with nourishment and energy. As members of

¹¹George Eldon Ladd, p. 543.

his Body, their movements are unified and they are built up in his love.

In Baptism they are made members of the fellowship. In the Eucharist they participate in him, and in one another. They share sorrow and joy together. One suffers that another may be comforted. By what each endures, the whole Church is built up. If one fails to grow, the growth of the whole is hindered.

That is the uniform evidence of the New Testament. Even as soon as the company of believers is first mentioned, "fellowship" is picked out as its distinctive feature (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37). This is something more than human fellowship, or the pleasure that people of like mind find in each other's presence. It is more than a fellowship in a common religion. It transcends all other human relationships, since it is a creation of God based on his gracious purpose.

CHAPTER VII

UNITY CRISIS

IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

Paul's message of unity to the Corinthians expressed in the words, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" is very relevant to the Armenian Apostolic Church, which twenty years ago was divided into two factions similar to the local congregation at Corinth, who claimed to be of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas. The split occurred over the question of the election and ordination of the candidate for catholicate of Cilicia or Antelias in Lebanon.

The Catholicate of Cilicia or Antelias forms the second ecclesiastical center of the Armenians, while the first center is known as The Holy Etchmiadzin, located in Soviet Armenia. These two seats are independent of each other, with Etchmiadzin constituting the first among the equals.

Previously there existed only the Holy Etchmiadzin as the headquarters of the supreme head of the Armenian Church. In other words as the Vatican is the center of the Roman Catholic Church, so Holy Etchmiadzin is the center of the Armenian Church. The word Etchmiadzin literally means "The only begotten (Son of God) descended." It is so

called in commemoration of a beautiful vision which St. Gregory, the Illuminator, the great Apostle of the Armenian people saw in connection with this holy place. According to historian Agathangelus, a contemporary of St. Gregory, St. Gregory after converting the King of Armenia and with him the whole country to Christianity, was thinking one night about the place and the shape of the church which he was contemplating to build as the first house of worship in the capital city of the Kingdom of Armenia.

As he was deep in his meditations, he suddenly saw a wonderful vision. The heaven was opened, and a blazing flood of light poured upon the earth. Through that light a parade of angels started coming down to earth; at the head of this heavenly procession, there was a tall and glorious figure. He was Our Lord Himself, the Only Begotten Son of God. He had a golden hammer in his hand.

Descending from heaven down to the spot where the present Church of Etchmiadzin is standing, he struck the ground three times with the hammer. Instantly a mighty golden column rose on the spot and then was transformed into a magnificent church. Before the vision was faded away, the form and the lines of this church was indelibly impressed in the mind of St. Gregory. From that day on, in 303 A.D., a splendid church has always stood on the same place over 1600 years. It was one of the first known Christian churches ever built on the earth.

✓ Christianity was preached in Armenia in the apostolic age by the Apostle Thaddeus (Judas, not Iscariot) and Bartholomew, according to the sacred tradition. They are called the first illuminators of the Armenian Church. It gradually took root among the people during the first three centuries. In the first part of the fourth century, in the year 301 A.D. Christianity became the official religion of Armenia as the result of the evangelical efforts of St. Gregory the Illuminator and the conversion of the Armenian King, Tiridates to Christianity.

If Christianity had not taken a strong root among the Armenian people during the first three centuries, it would have been impossible for this new faith to be established as a religion of state immediately in Armenia. During the first three centuries, the Armenian kings Ardashes (110 A.D.), Khosrov (230 A.D.), and Tiridates (287 A.D.) officially persecuted Christianity in Armenia.

This showed that the new religion Christianity, was strong enough among the Armenians during this period to draw persecution.¹ At the same time Christian martyrs in those three centuries in Armenia gave evidence that Christianity as a new religious movement had strong background in the country.

¹Malachia Ormanian, The Church of Armenia. (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1955), p. 7.

Therefore, in 301 A.D. when King Tiridates became a Christian and officially declared Christianity as a national and state religion, the people of Armenia were ready and accepted this new religion. Thus the Armenians were the first in history to declare Christianity as a state religion. King Constantine of Rome accepted Christianity twelve years later, in 313 A.D.

The first official Catholicos of the Armenian Church became St. Gregory the Illuminator, who was installed on the throne of Etchmiadzin by the unanimous vote of the people of Armenia at the first part of the fourth century. He immediately destroyed the temples of the heathen religion, and with the help of King Tiridates, and the Armenian princes, he built Christian churches all over the country for the people to worship God. In 303 A.D. the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin was the first such official Armenian church to be erected.

Beginning from St. Gregory the Illuminator until now, many Catholicoses have been installed on the throne of Etchmiadzin. The present catholicos is His Holiness Vazken I, who is the head of the Armenian Church now in Etchmiadzin. He is the Catholicos for all the Armenian Church.

Etchmiadzin, as the headquarters of the Armenian Church, has played a very important part in Armenian history. It has helped in shaping the Christian character

of the nation and creating and guarding the spiritual heritage of the Armenian people. When the Armenians lost their political power, they looked upon Etchmiadzin as the unifying center for all Armenians. In those disastrous periods of their national life, when invading barbarians crushed every human effort for freedom and higher aspirations, it was in the Church and its center, Etchmiadzin, that the Armenian people found their collective will for survival.

With the dispersal of an important part of the Armenians to the four corners of the earth, Etchmiadzin became the magnetic pole which held together the different communities of Armenians all over the world. In addition to these two seats of authority, the Church of Armenia has two patriarchal thrones, one in Jerusalem and the other in Istanbul. The Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem is the keeper of the Armenian Church rights in the Holy Land; and the Patriarch of Istanbul is the representative of the Armenian people before the government of that country (Turkey). The catholicate of Etchmiadzin exercises jurisdiction over the two patriarchates and all other dioceses in the world except Lebanon, Syria, and Cyprus.

Sometimes the throne of Etchmiadzin has been moved from place to place for the following reasons: (1) From the beginning the catholicoses used to establish their headquarters near the palace or the political center of the country. Because the political center was subject to

displacement, the catholicosate also felt itself compelled to change places. (2) The catholicoses were in possession of large properties and villages. They preferred to reside in their private properties, especially when they had quarrels with the kings and princes. (3) Unfavorable political situations and the lack of stability had led the catholicoses to leave their headquarters in search of safe places. (4) The rivalry between the princes contributed to the increase of the numbers of the catholicosate seats. The princes tended to have within their territory special catholicates. Besides, the ambitious catholicoses played a negative part in this respect.²

In 1294 due to foreign invasion and persecution, the seat of Etchmiadzin was displaced to Sis, a city in the Kingdom of Lesser Armenia or Cilicia. In the year 1441, a large number of bishops and priests considered it necessary to transfer the seat of the catholicate to its former center, Etchmiadzin. They sent a letter to the catholicos and asked for his approval. But the catholicos did not comply with the request although he consented that they elect another catholicos in Etchmiadzin. Three hundred clergymen had a meeting during which they elected a new catholicos. As a result the Armenian catholicate was divided into two: the seat of Etchmiadzin in Armenia and the seat of

²Aziz S. Atiya, A History of Eastern Christianity. (London: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1968), p. 334.

Sis in Cilicia. The catholicate of Sis or Cilicia was eventually deported with most of its congregations in the course of the First World War. Consequently the Catholicos took up his headquarters at Antelias in Lebanon with the help of the Near East Relief Organization.

In Lebanon there are two rival political Armenian parties and a third group composed of neutral individuals. The first political party is called Tashnak. The leaders of this party became the rulers of Armenian Republic after it gained independence in 1918. The life of the Republic lasted only one year when the Armenian communists seized power and expelled the Tashnak leaders from the country.

The Tashnak leaders found refuge in Middle Eastern countries, particularly in Egypt and Lebanon and organized themselves. Their main objective was to dominate the Armenians in diaspora and, in one way or another to topple the communist regime of Armenia. In 1939 thousands of Tashnaks joined the German forces and fought against the Russians in the hope that if Russia were defeated, they would be able to take over Armenia again.

The result was a deep frustration. Then they switched the struggle from the battleground to the press. They launched bitter campaigns against the communist oppression in Armenia. Their press was full of articles and stories describing ruthless deportations of thousands of Armenians to Siberia during Stalin's period. The

anti-communists' campaign in the press was intended to alienate the Armenians in diaspora from their homeland and to disseminate hate against the communists.

Afterwards they tried to assume the leadership of the Armenians in diaspora through the catholicate of Cilicia at Antelias, Lebanon, and set them in opposition to their homeland. In other words they decided to use the second center of the Armenian Church as a means to accomplish their political objectives. In this regard they took advantage of the democratic character of the Armenian Church.

Both clergymen and laymen take a share in the administration of the general affairs of the Church. This traditional participation of the lay element in church matters dates back to the earliest period of her history, when princes and satraps, and, after them, the leading men and deputies, in a word, the representatives of the people, continued to take their place side by side with bishops in the councils. They have had an active part in all discussions regarding questions of doctrine and discipline.

The catholicos of Sis or Cilicia is elected by the electoral councils of which two-thirds are laymen. The electoral councils consist of religious heads and lay deputies who are nominated by the dioceses as a whole. The leaders of Tashnak party were fully aware of the predominant influence of the the laymen over the election of

catholikos, tried to take advantage of it. They penetrated into the ecclesiastical councils by unfair or unlawful means and occupied most of the seats in the electoral councils. The leaders of the second rival party known as Henschak and their neutral sympathizers gave up their seats in the electoral councils in protest against Tashnak's arbitrary acts, instead of retaining their positions and showing resistance.

As a result the Tashnak party dominated the electoral councils and were in a position to elect a catholikos who could serve as a puppet. The leaders of the rival party Henschak as well as the neutral group found the situation very serious and urgently called on the catholikos of Etchmiadzin to come to Lebanon with the view of averting an ecclesiastical crisis. The catholikos of Etchmiadzin came hurriedly and tried hard to persuade the leaders of the Tashnak party to refrain from electing a catholikos who would be affiliated with them, and agree on a neutral candidate acceptable by all.

The catholikos of Etchmiadzin failed in his mission and left Lebanon for Egypt. The next day the electoral councils, dominated by Tashnaks elected catholikos a bishop who was known for his connections with the Tashnak party. In Egypt the catholikos of Etchmiadzin called the two patriarchs of Jerusalem and Turkey and all the bishops to a meeting to discuss the validity of the election which took place in Lebanon. The meeting lasted three days during

which the participants had a lengthy exchange of views and made a thorough evaluation of the situation. The participants headed by the catholicos of Etchmiadzin issued the following communique: "The election of the new catholicos of Cilicia is defective and therefore unacceptable."

The ordination and consecration ceremony of the newly elected catholicos was delayed for a year. According to the statute, it should be held within forty days. The delay was due to the fact that the Tashnak leaders encountered difficulties in finding three bishops. The ordination and consecration ceremony required the participation of twelve bishops maximum or three bishops minimum. The catholicos of Cilicia had only two bishops in addition to a candidate for catholicate. The Tashnak approached a number of bishops belonging to the catholicate of Etchmiadzin with the purpose of persuading them to take part in the ordination-consecration ceremony, but in vain.

At that time the number of the bishops attached to the catholicos of Etchmiadzin was estimated at thirty-six. None of them showed willingness to cooperate with the catholicate of Cilicia because they were under order from the catholicos of Etchmiadzin. The Tashnak leaders tried to win some bishops by promising a large amount of money and valuable property if they would participate in ordination-consecration ceremony. Their efforts again ended in failure. Finally they contacted a bishop in the Assyrian

church with which the Armenian Church is in communion. At first the Assyrian bishop turned down their request, but later he agreed, dazzled by the bribe offered him.

The participation of the Assyrian bishop was kept secret from the people for fear that the rival party could prevent him from taking part in the ordination-consecration ceremony. Until the last moment, the prevailing opinion was that the Tashnaks would go ahead with ordination-consecration ceremony by only two bishops in violation of the existing statute. They got ready for all of the eventualities of sabotage on the part of the rival party. Only the invited persons were allowed to attend the ordination-consecration ceremony in the cathedral. At the request of Tashnak, the Lebanese government sent a police force, which heavily armed, took up positions on the roof of the buildings surrounding the cathedrals.

Meanwhile, the religious brotherhood of the catholicate of Cilicia itself was split over the question of the election of catholicos. Three bishops and the majority of the priests boycotted the ordination ceremony and took refuge in a mountain resort building owned by the catholicate. I participated in the ordination-consecration ceremony as a deacon. The ceremony took place according to the plan and without any disruption. After a week the new catholicos gave an ultimatum to the rebellious bishops and the priests to return to the catholicate and warned if they

failed to obey, he would take drastic measures.

The rebellious bishops and the priests stood firm in their position. And one early morning they were taken by surprise when a large police force mounted in trucks and jeeps besieged the building and ordered them to vacate it in two hours. The bishops and the priests showed resistance, but when the policemen threatened to use force, they gave in.

Instead of returning to catholicate, and paying allegiance to him, they moved to a nearby hotel temporarily and afterwards adhered to the catholicate of Etchmiadzin. A large number of people in Lebanon, Syria, and Cyprus followed the example of the rebellious bishops and the priests. They criticized the new catholicos for his collaboration with a political party at the expense of the Church, and recognized the catholicate of Etchmiadzin as their spiritual head.

The catholicos of Etchmiadzin refused to grant recognition to the new catholicos of Cilicia. As a result there existed a strained relation between them. The catholicos of Cilicia accused the catholicos of Etchmiadzin of stirring up the people to rebellion, and labeled him as a communist agent. The catholicos of Etchmiadzin responded by accusing him of being a puppet, serving the interest of the political party, rather than the interest of the people and held him responsible for creating a crisis or division

within the Armenian Church.

The Tashnak party is western oriented. They used to get monetary aid from the United States for their struggle against communism in the Middle East. Their plan was to seize some of the dioceses belonging to the catholicate of Etchmiadzin and bring them under the jurisdiction of Cilicia. Thus they would strengthen their influence among the Armenians in diaspora.

The Tashnak party deputies in the Lebanese parliament formed a delegation and visited Greece and Persia where they had meetings with the government heads. They indicated that the Armenian bishops nominated by the catholicate of Etchmiadzin to work in these countries are communist sympathizers and urged them to allow the dioceses to be attached to catholicate of Cilicia.

The heads of the governments of Greece and Persia, known for their anti-communist tendencies, agreed to Tashnaks' request. In a short period the dioceses of Greece and Persia became a part of the catholicate of Cilicia. These illegal acts impelled the catholicate of Etchmiadzin to break off its relation with the catholicate of Cilicia on the grounds that they were open infringement upon its authority. After six years the patriarch of Jerusalem, as mediator, extended invitations to both catholicoses to visit Jerusalem with the view of reconciling differences. The two catholicoses accepted his invitations and went to

Jerusalem with their respective entourages. Three days of meetings and discussions resulted in an agreement which became possible by mutual concessions.

According to the agreement, the catholicos of Etchmiadzin would grant recognition of Cilicia and the latter, in his turn, promised not to seize further dioceses belonging to the catholicate of Etchmiadzin. Before their departure from Jerusalem, the two catholicoses warmly embraced each other in the midst of standing ovation.

Within a short period, it became clear that the catholicos of Cilicia had not signed the agreement in good faith. He simply made use of the Jerusalem meeting to insure his recognition and continued to encroach upon territory which fell under the authority of Etchmiadzin, by sending a bishop to southern France in the capacity of a prelate.

The catholicos of Etchmiadzin was disappointed. He had gone to Jerusalem with hesitation, and now, his reservations were justified. But he took his chance upon the request of many dignitaries and clergymen for the sake of restoring unity within the Armenian Church. He fully realized he was not dealing with the catholicos of Cilicia, but with fanatic political leaders who stood behind him.

The catholicos was the nominal head of the catholicate of Cilicia. The leaders of Tashnak part had chosen the catholicate of Cilicia as a means, to achieve their

political goals. This brought about division within the Armenian Church. The Armenian Church is represented in the World Council of Churches by two separate delegations. In many cities of the United States, one can come across two Armenian churches; one faithful to the catholicate of Etchmiadzin and the other attached to the catholicate of Cilicia, and no relationship whatsoever between them, despite the fact they have the same origin, profess the same doctrine and sacraments.

When we look at the actual condition of the Armenian Church in the light of Paul's presentation, of its unity, we can only conclude that the present disunity is the result of sin. Somewhere along the line, the Armenian Church has failed to understand her own nature. And this failure cannot be accounted for merely by a lack of understanding. It is an ugly fact which can be explained only by the frank admission that the disunity wrought in the world by sin has been allowed to creep into the Armenian Church and to leave its mark there. When the Church divides at any place, it is the result of sin, either on the part of those who live it, or those who thrust them out, or both.

We should not glory in our divisions, but repent of them, and work for their healing. To accept our present divisions as right, or to seek to perpetuate them, or even to go so far as deliberately to foster new divisions, is to

try to destroy the Body of Christ, and is thus a thrust at Christ himself. Christ cannot be divided, nor can his body, the Church, remain divided save at the cost of weakness and failure. And those who, in the name "separation," are advocating new rents in the Body of Christ, are, whether they know it or not, seeking to assassinate Christ. If they do not know this, then they can only be prayed for, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The purity of the Armenian Church is to be secured by clearing up the blood stream, not by severing its members one from another. No person or political party which seeks to rend Christ's members one from another should be followed or encouraged, no matter what ever else their spiritual excellencies may be. A deliberately schismatic person, the central drive of whose work it is to separate Christians one from another, is either deluded or bad. In either case, he is not to be followed.

It is easy to hide from the problem of disunity by rationalization. We have become so accustomed to the divisions in the Body of Christ that it is natural to accept them as right. Familiarity and custom brand them as normal. The various factions and denominations are tempted to be content with pursuing their own program, as though they had little or no concern with the life of the whole Church, of which they are a very small part. This leads to the assumption that one member of a body may fulfil its function

in detachment from the other members of the body. Paul answered this strange doctrine when he wrote, "For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body." (I Cor. 12:14-16)

Therefore, he concluded, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have not need of you.'" (I Cor. 12:21) No, if the factions and denominations are members of a body, they cannot adequately function in isolation from the other members of that body. A body is whole only as all its members are coordinated into a unity, and each member fulfills its proper function only as it relates itself to the activity of all the other members.

Another excuse given is that the unity of the Church is a spiritual unity, which remains in spite of the external disunity. For this reason it is said, we need not concern ourselves about the outward divisions in the Church, but can rest assured that the Church is one in the realm of the unseen. Two things make the view questionable. First, granted that the unity of a body consists in the one life which animates it rather than in its visible organization, can this one life vitalize all the members of a body if they are detached from each other? Secondly, the Bible does not

tell of disembodied spirits. A "spiritualism" which can believe in the sort of spiritual unity which is not seeking to embody itself in visible ways is wholly foreign to the Scriptures. If the Church is one spiritually, then its lack of unity in the concrete, visible realities of its life is a denial of its nature, and calls for a remedy.

By nature the Church is one. When Paul was dealing with the problem of threatened disunity in the Philippian church, he wrote, "Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Their unity was not something for them to achieve. They already had it in Christ. It was theirs only to realize what was already God's gift to them.

Likewise when writing to the Ephesian church about maintaining "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), Paul indicated that they were to maintain that which was already theirs in the nature of the case. "There is one body and one spirit," he wrote (Eph. 4:4). They were not to make the body one. They were to realize it was one. But how was this realization to come?

They were to grow into it by love, "We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint by which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph. 4:15-16). The unity of the Church is given to us as

a foretaste but will be fully realized in the age to come. It is our sin which keeps us from realizing it fully. For this reason our disunity should be a constant cause of penitence. And as we grow in grace, we should likewise grow in the realization of the unity which is ours in Christ.

As far as the Armenian Church is concerned, there are two ways of finding a solution to the existing crisis and restoring the unity. The first is to abolish the Catholicate of Cilicia and convert into a patriarchate along with the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Istanbul. Otherwise the duality of two independent spiritual heads will remain as a constant source of tension and conflict. The second way is to prevent the political parties from interfering directly in the church affairs either by reducing participation in the electoral councils or discouraging members with strong party leanings from becoming active members of electoral councils.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Bernhard W. Understanding the Old Testament. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1957.
- Atiya, Aziz S. A History of Eastern Christianity. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1968.
- Barclay, William. The Mind of St. Paul. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1958.
- Barth, Karl. The Church and the Churches. London: J. Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1937.
- Best, Ernest. One Body in Christ. London: S.P.C.K., 1955.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. Primitive Christianity. New York: World Publishing Co., 1969.
- Cerfaux, Lucien. The Church in the Theology of St. Paul. New York: Herder and Herder, 1959.
- Cragg, Gerald R. "The Epistle to the Romans: Exposition," in Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954.
- Davidson, Robert. The Bible Speaks. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1959.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. Pauline Theology. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967.
- Gartner, Bertil. The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament. Cambridge: University Press, 1965.
- Goguel, Maurice. The Primitive Church. New York: Macmillan Co., 1964.
- Goodspeed, Edgar J. The Story of the New Testament. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916.
- Goppelt, Leonhard. Apostolic and Post Apostolic Times. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970.
- Kraus, H. J. The People of God in the Old Testament. New York: Association Press, 1958.

- Ladd, George Eldon. A Theology of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975.
- Macquarrie, John. Principles of Christian Theology. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.
- Miller, Donald G. The People of God. Naperville, Illinois: SCM Book Club, 1957.
- Minear, Paul S. Images of the Church in the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952.
- Ormanian, Malachia. The Church of Armenia. London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1955.
- Richardson, Alan. An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament. New York: Harper Bros. Publishers, 1958.
- Richardson, Peter. Israel in the Apostolic Church. Cambridge: University Press, 1969.
- Robinson, James. The Theology of Paul. Lecture course given 1956, Candler School of Theology and Columbia University.
- Robinson, John A.T. The Body. Chicago: Alec. R. Allenson, Inc., 1955.
- Schmidt, K. L., Gerhard Kittel (ed.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951.
- Schnackenburg, Rudolf. The Church in the New Testament. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968.
- Schweizer, Eduard. The Church as the Body of Christ. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964.
- Temple, William. Christ in His Church. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1925.
- Whiteley, D.E.H. The Theology of St. Paul. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.